

The SCAG region, with a population of over 16 million residents, is the second largest in the nation behind New York. The region covers 38,000 square miles, and its governmental system includes 184 cities within the six counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. It is a region of world-renowned universities, museums, art galleries, and tourist attractions. Southern California is also famous for its diverse mix of communities; its beaches, parks, and open space; and its mild weather.

Prior to 1900, the Southern California region was primarily agrarian. The extension of the railroad lines into the area, and the growth of the motion picture, petroleum, and aircraft industries, contributed to the region's reputation as the land of opportunity, and to its prosperity. By 1920 the region had over 1 million residents; by 1970 the population had grown to over 10 million; and by 2020 the population is expected to grow to more than 22 million.

Table 1

Regional Population Growth 1910-1998 (millions)			
1910	.662	1960	7.824
1920	1.194	1970	10.055
1930	2.658	1980	11.590
1940	3.312	1990	14.641
1950	4.997	1998	16.262

Source: California Department of Finance and SCAG

## Population

During the 1980s, the region grew two and a half times faster than the rest of the nation. However, the growth rate slowed in the 1990s due to the 1990-1994 economic recession. There are two factors which account for population growth – natural increase and net migration. Natural increase is the balance between births and deaths. Net migration is the difference between people moving in and out of the region. The recession had an impact on domestic migration, which is sensitive to economic cycles. Most of the growth of the 1990s occurred because of births. (Please see map 1 for the change in population density between 1990 and 1997.)

California, the most populous state in the country in 1995 with 31.6 million people, is projected to have the fastest rate of population growth between 1995 and 2025. A high rate of natural increase and immigration will account for a large portion of California's rapid growth. The 1995-2025 average annual birth rate for California is expected to be 20 births per 1,000 population, compared to 10 births per 1,000 population in West Virginia, the state with the lowest projected birth rate. Additionally, California is expected to attract more than one third of the country's immigrants during the 30-year period. In 1996 California had the largest foreign-born population in numbers (8 million) and percentages (one-fourth of the state's population).

Table 2

Population in the SCAG Region, 1980-98, with forecast to 2020 (000)						
	Based on U.S. Census		Estimate "July"		Forecast "July"	
County	1980	1990	1997	1998	2010	2020
Imperial	92	109	143	143	206	280
Los Angeles	7,478	8,863	9,525	9,650	10,874	12,250
Orange	1,933	2,411	2,705	2,764	3,092	3,245
Riverside	663	1,170	1,424	1,459	2,217	2,816
San Bernardino	895	1,418	1,617	1,646	2,217	2,830
Ventura	529	669	727	738	811	932
<b>SCAG Region</b>	<b>11,590</b>	<b>14,641</b>	<b>16,141</b>	<b>16,400</b>	<b>19,416</b>	<b>22,353</b>

Source: California Department of Finance and SCAG  
 Actual based on U.S. Census. Forecast based on 1994 Base Year.  
 Forecast based on estimates by cities, may not concur with other sources.

# Population

Table 3

States with the Highest Percent of Foreign-Born Population, 1996	
State	Foreign Born as Percent of Total Population
<b>California</b>	<b>25.1%</b>
New York	17.7%
Hawaii	16.6%
Florida	15.2%
New Jersey	14.6%
Nevada	11.4%
Texas	11.1%
Arizona	10.9%
Rhode Island	10.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey

According to the U.S. Census, there is no longer any ethnic or racial majority group in the region. The white proportion of the population declined from over 60 percent of the total in 1980 to less than 50 percent in 1990. The African-American population declined from 9 percent to under 8 percent of the total, whereas the Hispanic and Asian populations increased in proportion to the total population. The Hispanic population grew from 24 percent to 33 percent of the total, and the Asian population grew from 6 percent to 9 percent of the total. (Please see map 2 for population diversity, and maps 3 - 6 for the distribution of the major ethnic groups throughout the region.)

## GROWTH IN THE NATION

The annual rate of population growth in the nation fell from 1.02 percent in 1990 to less than .88 percent in 1996. A declining level of natural increase was the result of fewer births and more deaths. The decrease in births is due largely to the aging of the Baby Boom generation. The major factor contributing to the increase in deaths is the growing number of people over 85 years old.

## Population

Net migration in the nation during the 1990s has remained relatively constant, accounting for approximately one third of the total annual increase in population. The Asian and Pacific Islander population was the only segment which contributed to larger net migration than natural increase. The non-Hispanic White proportion of the population in the nation is projected to continue to decrease, according to the US Bureau of the Census. (Please see Population under Metropolitan Regions for a discussion of population growth in metropolitan regions.)

Table 4

Percent of Population Growth in the Nation by Race and Ethnicity: 1990 and 1996		
Race/Ethnicity	1990	1996
Non-Hispanic White	37%	27%
African American	18%	18%
Asian/Pacific Islander	15%	15%
Hispanic	32%	42%

Source: California Department of Finance and SCAG

Note: Percent add to more than 100 due to rounding, and since people of Hispanic origin may be of any race.